

# COMMON GROUND



JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1949

VOLUME III NUMBER 1

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# THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

## Objects:

To combat all forms of religious and racial intolerance. To promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews, and to foster co-operation in educational activities and in social and community service.

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# COMMON GROUND

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*The Presidential Address of the Archbishop at the Annual General Meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews, December 9th, 1948.*

## OUR PRESENT TASK

*His Grace The Archbishop of Canterbury*



The essential and intrinsic nature of this Council is that it consists of Christians and Jews who trust one another and have confidence in one another. Its members, aware of all that in the past has antagonised Christians and Jews, and the still existing frictions, suspicions, and hostilities, have in themselves overcome those barriers in obedience to a higher law and spirit.

We exist as a Council because we recognise and hold fast to principles God-given, sacred in their origin, and true, which are common both to the Jewish and to the Christian religions. Some of those principles that bind us together are set out in the booklet *Foundations of our Civilisation* which ends with a section entitled "Fundamental Postulates of Christianity and Judaism in Relation to the Human Order".

It is because of that real and profound agreement that this Council exists.

There are two respects in which the range of our agreement as a Council is limited. We exclude from our consideration those religious

and theological differences which remain, and which are, of course, important. That means that we do not question the right of each side to propagate its own faith in its fulness to the other in all lawful and just ways—although I think we should have the right to exercise judgment on unlawful and unjust ways if such took place.

The second limitation is this, that we exclude political matters which may divide Christians and Jews. To that point I will return in a moment. But in the wide range of common interests and beliefs we here speak one to another as friends who trust one another.

## **The Functions of the Council**

The general functions of this Council are threefold. First, by virtue of the exercise of its influence and by its activities, it aims to promote outside the Council that spirit which exists within it, and so to promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews in all sections of the community. Those last words are set out as one of our Objects. Although it does not appear as our first Object, I have put it first, because unless we can succeed in creating a positive mutual understanding, nothing can happen at all to improve the situation in which we find ourselves to-day. Without it, what we have in common will not be seen or appreciated. Without it, legitimate differences will be soured by misunderstanding and never bridged, while illegitimate causes of division will grow in malignity and evil.

That, then, is our first function. Our second is to foster those things in the community for which we both stand. Here again I might refer to the *Foundations of our Civilisation*. The Dean of St. Paul's in his Foreword mentions some of those common truths for which we stand and for the fostering of which we act. The first, as he says, is the primary affirmation of both creeds, that there is a creative and righteous God, who is Father of all men. That is a bulwark against every kind of materialism. Secondly, he emphasises the decisive importance of moral principles and the primacy of righteousness; and thirdly, the principle of the dignity of the individual and of his rights.

Those three points which we all hold in common, derive from the same source. It has been one of our functions to foster these truths. Nobody will deny that there has never been a time when it was more essential that those truths should be proclaimed, defended, and I would say restored to the community in which we live.

Then there is the third function, which appears as the first of the Objects, but which I put third, namely, to combat religious and racial



#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING PLATFORM

(Names left to right) Rev. H. Carter, Mr. A. C. F. Beales, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev. W. W. Simpson, The Marquess of Reading.

intolerance. I put it third because it would be the natural consequence of those other two aims which I have mentioned. We combat intolerance because it conflicts with our common primary principle, and we do it wherever it arises; but circumstances compel us to be specially concerned obviously with the problem of antisemitism, which is still a pressing danger and which has wrought and still wreaks such havoc. We are specially concerned with this problem because the consciousness of Christian and Jew is so deeply involved in the matter, and because the causes and manifestations of antisemitism are so insidious, so intrusive, and so complex.

We combat this jointly in the name of Christianity and in the name of Judaism. We do so because God is Father of all, and all are equally dear in His sight, and because prejudice, antipathy and hatred, must never be allowed to direct human relations. Where judgment must be made of one man by another it must be made humbly and soberly; and even then love is still the fulfilling of the law. Antisemitism exhibits and has exhibited at its worst all the evil features against which our religions stand—unreasoning hatred, unthinking prejudice, irrational judgment, and denial of discriminating love.

## The Work of the Council.

We are now asked to consider our work and policy in the present situation. That situation presents two major difficulties. The first is the common or widely held belief that "the Jew" is a shady and shameless profiteer in the black market and all that goes with it. This belief has received and is receiving an added impulse from the present Lynskey Tribunal investigation, in which some Jews have figured discredibly. This is a permanent factor in the situation we have to meet, but the Tribunal gives it an immediate emphasis.

On this I would say three things. First, we must recognise that that kind of belief about the Jew is very deeply seated in the public mind, and it is going to take more than a generation to eradicate it. It is here, and we must face it.

Secondly, I think we are bound to say—and I believe my Jewish friends will agree—that there is enough truth in that belief to make it impossible for us to eradicate it by merely ignoring it or denying it. There are enough Jews of whom that is in some way or another true to make a mere denial beside the point: and it is not merely that there are some Jews of whom it is true, but also the fact that there is a kind of tradition and camaraderie which marks Jews of that sort.

Thirdly, side by side with this, is a fact which the gentile never seems to think about, namely, that the same kind of thing is rampant amongst gentiles also. It is these three things we have got to get into the picture. There is this belief in the public mind; there is the use of evidence against some Jews to support a prejudice against all Jews, and there is the unwillingness to admit that the same kind of thing is prevalent and the same kind of people exist among gentiles as among Jews.

I have said all that because it is one of the difficulties which we have frankly got to realise in the task we are out to perform. We would defend, everyone of us, the good name of the Jews. We would resist to the utmost the idea that the existence of shady Jews offers any excuse for antisemitism. We must make clear that this evil which is manifested in some Jews is manifested equally in some gentiles. My conclusion on this point is therefore that what we are united in doing is not merely trying to combat something, but to uphold the need both in Jew and in gentile for a return to righteousness in every aspect of life, individual and communal. That is the second of the objectives which I mentioned above. It is a message we have got to give both to Christian and to Jew and to those of no religion whether they are called Jew or Christian.

## **Palestine.**

The second difficulty which confronts us is the complex of problems that arise from Palestine. I do not know whether this is too obvious to say, but we are in some difficulty from our title. "Christians" is purely a religious description, but the other half of our title—"Jews"—means so many things. It may mean a Jew by race and religion, but equally it is used of people who are Jews by race and have no religion at all. The word "Jew" may now mean a national of the Jewish state, but equally it may mean a person who is not a national of the Jewish state, but who sympathises with that state and has a natural loyalty towards it. Again it may mean a Jew who has no national connection with the Jewish state and very little sympathy with it. It is a fact that in our title the two words "Christians" and "Jews" do not stand on all fours. In the one case the term is purely a religious one; in the other case it is a term with regard to which there is a confusion of religious, racial, and now national feelings.

Furthermore, there is the complication that for the first time the Jew of this country or of any other western country has to define his position in relation to two national states—the state to which he belongs and of which he is a citizen, and another national state to which quite obviously he has some attachment of loyalty, concern, and interest. All that is as confusing, perhaps, as the position in Palestine is confusing.

## **The Kind of Spirit We Exist to Create.**

Here we are non-political, but we cannot be unaware of the external political tensions which exist, and outside this Council we ourselves are subject to them. But inside this Council—and I return now to our policy at this present time—we exist in this political field to create the kind of spirit in which outside political discussion can be carried on considerably and understandingly, with mutual forbearance and with a desire to appreciate both sides of what is a difficult problem.

I understand that through the activities of this Council such discussions do take place on the political aspects of Palestine and their reactions here. I am perfectly sure we ought to do everything we can to encourage such discussions, as a means of enabling Christians and Jews with their differing views of these events to talk them out, and see how far they can reach common conclusions.

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amongst ourselves, and then outside, a common understanding and through that understanding to make a common contribution to the restoration of the fundamental principles which govern both our religions.

*In its September issue, "Common Ground" included an article on Education on the Continent, promising another on Education in England. Here it is:*

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES

*Frederic Mason*

The 1944 Education Act is a milestone in the provision of religious education; that its sections embody the wishes of the great majority of people was shown by the lack of controversy when the Act was debated in Parliament. The control of schools by voluntary bodies will diminish—thus there will be fewer schools in which religious teaching distinctive of a particular sect is given. Education continually increases in cost and the Churches are unable either to provide the capital expenditure for aided schools or to maintain private schools except with high fees which only a small section of the population can afford to pay. But religious bodies will have considerable opportunity to influence the schools indirectly.

### The Agreed Syllabuses

The Act states that the school day shall begin with "collective worship on the part of all pupils in attendance" and "that religious instruction shall be given in every school." In the fully maintained (county) schools the instruction is given according to *Agreed Syllabuses* drawn up by conferences of four panels, representing the Church of England, other religious denominations, the teachers, and the Local Education Authorities.

The publication of many of these syllabuses has shown that they have many things in common. They do not approach the Bible as a literary, historical or a geographical text; it is studied for its revelation of God and of His dealings with man. The syllabuses are Christian; Jesus Christ, as Son of God and Saviour of men, is the testimony of the Biblical record. Church history as the record of the work of the Holy Spirit has been given a place. The Old Testament still has a prominent place but greater attention is paid to the Psalms and the books of the Prophets, and rather less to the historical sections.

## **Importance of the Teacher**

Good syllabuses would be of little value unless there were well qualified teachers to use them. The Churches, recognising that they can have little direct control over the schools, are concentrating more on the teachers. A renewed emphasis is being put on teaching as a vocation, and the call is being made to young people in the Church to accept this vocation. They are being asked especially to gain qualifications in religious knowledge. Religious bodies, like the Church of England, which are unable to find the capital for the retention of their schools as aided schools, are retaining and extending their training colleges in order that students in training, whether they intend to teach Scripture or not, may come under the influence of a religious body.

It should be clear that the religious provisions of the Act, and especially as they apply to county schools, are designed to meet the needs of the majority. A child will join in an act of collective worship and receive instruction from an agreed syllabus which will be Christian in nature and undenominational. The core of the worship and the instruction will be that common to all the major religious denominations. Thus whilst the Apostles' creed is not likely to be taught directly for reasons of technique it will form the background to instruction, because it forms the intellectual summary of the Christian faith and it is not distinctive of any denomination.

## **The Rights of the Religious Minorities**

But the rights of minorities are safeguarded. The conscience clause of the 1870 Act which allowed a parent to withdraw a child from religious instruction to which he had a conscientious objection has been incorporated in succeeding Acts. No religious teaching which is distinctive of a particular denomination can be taught in county schools. Further, parents of pupils in county schools who desire them to have religious instruction according to a particular religious denomination can arrange for that instruction to be given under certain conditions in school time. Children in voluntary schools may be given religious instruction according to an agreed syllabus if their parents desire it. These two provisions appeared first in the 1936 Act and have been incorporated in the 1944 Act. The greatest power is given to those religious minorities who have schools under their control. Subject to certain conditions governing efficiency of teachers, they are allowed to choose their teachers and to give religious instruction according to their own particular tenets. The price they have to pay for this is fifty per cent. of the capital expendi-

ture on the school fabric; the State and the local authorities pay the rest of the cost. The Roman Catholics who feel strongly that religious education should be controlled by the Church are maintaining as many voluntary schools as possible and other religious bodies are retaining a few schools as "models." Private schools, i.e., schools which receive no grant from either the State or the local authorities, are free to give the religious instruction they desire and some of these schools have religious foundations and maintain close relations with religious bodies. Most denominations run some schools of this kind, but inevitably the school fees are high, and only a very small fraction of the population pass through them.

### **Religious Education To-day**

So far one has been writing of the aims of religious education in schools and of the intentions of the religious denominations. Something must be said of the present state of religious education. It is important to remember that a school inevitably reflects the life of the community and if that life is at a low religious level, then there will be little religion in school. No one would deny that the religious life of the wider society is weak at the moment and the schools suffer in a similar way. Whether there are many or few oases in a wilderness of desert is a matter of opinion, but those oases occur where, by accident, teachers are appointed who have a religious vocation and considerable teaching ability. Religious bodies, both Christian and Jewish, could combine to insist that there is adequate provision and good conditions for the giving of religious instruction in school. The need for this insistence is great. If the Churches could also ensure that from them there issued a succession of fit persons to teach then, by the Grace of God, the wilderness would blossom.

### **Where Christian and Jew Can Combine**

A final point. What kind of wisdom is taught in schools? "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? . . . Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men." Maritain in his *Science and Wisdom Part I*, suggests that there are three wisdoms, a wisdom of the East, Greek wisdom, which is "human wisdom, rational wisdom, not aspiring to be a wisdom of salvation" and a third wisdom, the wisdom of the Old Testament, "a wisdom of salvation and holiness, of deliverance and freedom of eternal life." It is quite impossible in this article to develop these points, but it is fair to state that the knowledge taught in schools since the Renaissance has been mainly based upon Greek

wisdom and that it has become increasingly humanistic and secular. Throughout the Old and New Testaments the events of this world are explained in terms of the activity of God, but in contrast few people in the West to-day have an immediate and active consciousness that this is God's world. The most important contribution which could be made to religious education in day schools to-day is to replace or supplement the Greek wisdom by this third wisdom, the wisdom of the Old and New Testaments. It is surely significant that Buber, Maritain and Brunner, Jew, Roman Catholic and Protestant, all stress this point and meet here on common ground. The wisdom of the schools must be that given by God. "Wisdom must give itself, must itself open the gates and descend from Heaven." (p. 14 *Science and Wisdom*.) Christian and Jew can combine to see that this wisdom is taught in schools. They can then separate, as need be, to teach their own tenets in their churches and synagogues.

*NOTE. Educational nomenclature changes and tends to be misunderstood. A county school is a school in which all costs are paid by the State and local authority. In a voluntary school 50% of the capital expenditure on buildings is borne by the voluntary body; all other charges are paid by the State and local authority.*

*In this article, Professor Bentwich discusses the position of British Jews vis-à-vis the British people and the State of Israel.*

## THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND JEWISH LOYALTIES

*Professor Norman Bentwich*

The establishment of the State of Israel raises for the Jewish citizens of Great Britain and other countries the question of dual or divided loyalties. Hitherto the position for British Jews who were Zionists has been simple. Their activity for the Jewish National Home was an exercise of their citizen duty so long as Great Britain held the trust from the League of Nations to facilitate the establishment of that home. The position was indeed growing more difficult since 1939, because the British policy on Palestine seemed to Jews in this country, and also to many non-Jews, to involve a whittling away and even a betrayal of that trust.

## How Tension Developed

The hostility between the Jews of Palestine and Great Britain has been intensified since the end of the war in 1945, when the British Government maintained a rigidly restrictive policy against Jewish immigration and Jewish acquisition of land. That led to terrorist outrages of Jewish extremists against British soldiers and civilians in Palestine. Their sense of frustration induced frenzy, and frenzy induced frightfulness.

American Jewry which, during the war, had become more and more concerned with the development of the Jewish National Home, moved the American Government to take a strong line with the British Government. The appointment of the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry by two governments, and its unanimous report which was published in the summer of 1946, gave hopes of urgent and positive action about immigration and land and the maintenance of the British Trust. But that hope was belied; and in 1947 the British Government turned to the United Nations for a solution of a problem which it had found intractable.

The Resolution of the Assembly of the United Nations in November, 1947, was that Great Britain should renounce the Mandate, and that Palestine should be partitioned into two independent states, Jewish and Arab, while Jerusalem should be under International trusteeship. The first part of the recommendation was welcomed by the British people. The second, which was strongly opposed by the League of Arab States, was unwelcome also to the British Government.

In the sorry story of the last months of the British Trust, the great mass of Jews in the United Kingdom and in the Commonwealth have found themselves in constant antagonism to British policy, which seemed to be steadfastly frustrating the deliberate decisions of the majority of the United Nations. At the same time, they have been troubled by the campaign of virulent hostility to England which has been fostered in the United States as well as in Palestine by Jewish bodies. The issue of dual and divided loyalties has therefore become urgent.

It should be laid down at the outset that the word "nation" is ambiguous. It is used to denote both a state, which is a political unit, and an ethnic group, which is a cultural unit bound together by language, religion, history and common aspirations. The word "nationality" is sometimes used for the cultural unit; and "nation," more strictly, for the political. The two things are fundamentally different because the modern big nation-state, like the Soviet Union or the

United Kingdom, is regularly composed of many ethnic nationalities, and many members of the State owe a dual loyalty to nation and nationality.

### **The Value in Dual Loyalties**

Dual loyalties are not only unobjectionable but are desirable. It is one of the distinctions between a free democracy and the totalitarian state, that in a democracy citizens are encouraged to hold more than one attachment. Side by side with their duty to the state there may be devotion to a Trade Union or a Party, a Church or a national group. Within the British Commonwealth the Scots and the Irish, the Canadian, the South African and Australian, have an intense feeling of loyalty towards their homeland, and also towards the Commonwealth as a whole. Outside their homeland, millions of Welsh, Scots and Irish who are citizens of, and owe political loyalty to, the United States and other countries still retain a deep attachment to the country in which they or their ancestors were born. Historical philosophers have emphasised the value to the state of fostering national differences. Lord Acton wrote:

"The presence of different nations under the same sovereignty . . . provides against the servility which flourishes under the shadow of a single authority by balancing the interests, multiplying associations, and giving to the subject the restraint and support of outward opinion."

The Jews have been unique for centuries in having an immensely strong sense of nationality without a national home or state of their own, and having preserved with unparalleled devotion their national culture, which has been described as "a portable Fatherland." For them, culture took the place of country. It was one of the essential aims of Zionism to make them again a normal nationality. Now that the State of Israel is established, Jewish citizens of Israel, whether living in the land or outside it, will owe their political loyalty to that state.

### **To Seek the Well-being of the British People**

The rest of the Jews, who are and will be the great majority, will owe their political loyalty, not to Israel, but to the state of which they are citizens. That does not mean loyalty to a mystical abstraction but to the *people* of the country. Jewish citizens of Great Britain must therefore seek the well-being of the British people. They may uphold

what they believe to be the true British tradition and oppose any policy of the British Government which, in their view, violates that tradition. It is the essential feature of democracy that a large part of the citizens may at any time oppose the actions and policy of the government. The Jews then, whether as members of a political party or as members of a nationality specially concerned with the Jewish National Home, are perfectly entitled to oppose the policy of any British Government which, in their view, is acting unfairly or unwisely towards the State of Israel. And not only Jews, but Christians who believe in the benefit to humanity which a Jewish national home or Jewish state may bring, will oppose a policy which is directed to weaken or frustrate that aim. But as loyal citizens of Great Britain, Jews cannot have any part in a campaign anywhere in the world against the British people.

It follows also that the Jews who are living outside the State of Israel and who are not citizens of that country, should not have a part in the policy of Israel. The policy of Israel must be determined and decided by the citizens of Israel and not by masses of Jews in America or elsewhere. In America particularly, there is a tendency on the part of some Jews not only to try to influence the policy of the American Government, which they are entitled to do, but to influence the policy of Israel, which they are *not* entitled to do.

### **Loyalty to a World Society**

There is one other new aspect of these dual or triple loyalties which arises from the growing conception that all countries owe loyalty to a world society, at present imperfectly organised in the United Nations. The political destiny of Palestine and the creation of the State of Israel are peculiarly a part of the world order which is being established by the United Nations. It was a Commission of the United Nations which proposed the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, and it was the Assembly of the United Nations which, a year ago, by a large majority adopted the recommendation of the Commission and defined the boundaries of the two States, and prescribed a Constitution for the Free City of Jerusalem under an International Trusteeship.

Palestine, by virtue of its unique history and its association with the three great religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is felt instinctively by a large part of the world, and most of all by the Protestant English-speaking peoples, to be a country which concerns all humanity, and not only the nations which inhabit it. It commands in a sense

the attachment of all English peoples. The special interest of Britain and the Commonwealth in the peace and progress of the land of the Jews will be understood and respected by all.

Once a settlement has been achieved in Palestine and the passions and emotions caused by the events of recent years have been cleared away, the old mutual friendship and respect between the Jews of the world and the British peoples should quickly be resumed. It is encouraging in this connection that, throughout these years of estrangement and conflict, a growing number of young Palestinian Jews have come to England, to her schools and colleges, because they recognised that this is more than any other country the land of tolerance and liberty and goodwill.

### **Creation of a New World Citizenship**

It may be indeed, that through the Jewish loyalty to the Land of Israel the ideas of world loyalty and world citizenship, which are more and more recognised as essential, will be fruitfully fostered. Dr. Maude Roydon-Shaw wrote a few years ago on the service which Jews might render through their double loyalty to the country in which they live and the spiritual home to which they are attached.

"It might be that they are the founders and pioneers of that true internationalism for lack of which the world perishes. We seek to make links between nations, classes and interests. Scientists come together; women come together; workers come together, in their congresses. But, when the strain comes, the links break and nationalism remains. The Jew's loyalty to the country in which he lives and to his Jewish descent, these are two things which have never broken yet. Is there not here a natural priesthood, and order of service to the world?"

To-day the Jew's loyalty to his Judaism is linked with the establishment of a Jewish State in Israel.

For both the English and the Jews the development of their loyalty to the whole human society will be a natural process. The citizens of the British Commonwealth include a quarter of the world's population and parts of all races. For them it should be an easy transition. For the Jews, too, who are still scattered amongst all peoples of the world, the larger loyalty should be easy. May we not hope that the English and the Jews together will take the lead in the creation of a new world citizenship.

### THREE BASIC ISSUES IN THE

*In the July number of the United Nations Bulletin, "International Bill of Human Rights by the Economic and Social Council. Under the leadership of Malik lifts into view three questions which have been the whole work of the Commission on human rights and the human race.*

In the elaboration of the Bill of Rights, and especially of the Declaration, the most important basic issues, whether explicit, or presupposed, were in my opinion, three. There was first the question as to the extent to which the Declaration should explicitly recognise the rights of the state. Most of the members believed that the Declaration should express in simple terms the fundamental individual freedoms; that it was a declaration of human and not of state rights. The U.S.S.R., emphasized the duty of man to the state and to the community.

The second basic issue was the degree of emphasis to be given the individual-personal rights on the one hand, and the so-called economic social rights on the other. Everybody wanted to see both types of right affirmed; the only difference was as to emphasis and subordination. The Soviet states in general, interpreted the problem of human rights as being essentially that of the economic and social rights of "the broad masses of the people," and of the duty of the state to guarantee these rights to them. The United States and the United Kingdom laid greater stress on the more traditional individual liberties. Professor René Cassin of France took an intermediate position; while not overlooking the traditional values, "social security" to him was of the essence of human rights.

The third basic issue is the question of the nature and origin of these rights. By what title does man possess them? Are they conferred upon him by the State, or by Society, or by the United Nations? Or do they belong to his nature so that apart from them he simply ceases to be man? Now if they simply originate in the State or Society or the United Nations, it is clear that what the State now grants, it might one day withdraw without thereby violating any higher law. But if these rights and freedoms belong to man as man, then the State or the

## N THE BILL OF HUMAN RIGHTS

ed News Bulletin, there is an article entitled:  
Rights by Charles Malik, President of U.N.  
Under sub-heading "Three Basic Issues," Mr.  
tions which he feels to be not only inherent in  
on human Rights, but of abiding concern to

United Nations, far from conferring them upon him, *must recognise and respect them*, or else it would be violating the higher law of his being. This is the question of whether the State is subject to higher law, the law of nature, or whether it is a sufficient law unto itself. If it is the latter, then nothing judges it: it is the judge of everything. But if there is something above it, which it can discover and to which it can conform, then any positive law which contradicts that transcendent norm is by nature null and void. Finally, if my fundamental rights and freedoms belong to me by nature, then they are not a chance assemblage of items: they must constitute an ordered whole. It may be that some are more ultimate than others. It may be that a spiritually free, but economically insecure person is better than the richest millionaire who knows nothing of spiritual freedom.

The deepest formulation of the present crisis in human rights is not that these rights have been brutally violated in the recent war; nor is it that there is not enough clamour demanding their proper establishment and protection.

The real crisis in human rights does not lie along any of these lines. *It consists rather in the fact that people to-day do not believe they have natural, inherent, inalienable rights.* You should see and hear modern man argue about his rights! Can you suggest to him that he is originally and by nature possessed of his fundamental rights? The merest suggestion that there is nature, reality, truth, peace and rest, an unchanging order of things which it is our supreme destiny to know and conform to, is anathema to modern man. Having lost his hold on God, or more accurately, having blinded himself to God's constant hold on him, he seeks for his rights elsewhere in vain. The spectacle of a being having lost his proper being—can there be anything more tragic?

*W. W. Simpson attended the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches as an observer on behalf of the International Council of Christians and Jews.*

## **TOWARDS CHRISTIAN UNITY**

*W. W. Simpson*

For two weeks last summer Amsterdam, already busy with final preparations for a Royal Jubilee and Queen Juliana's accession to the throne, was "invaded" by some 1,400 ecclesiastics and layfolk from 150 different Christian communions in more than 40 different countries. The story of their most hospitable reception by the friendly Dutch, and of their labours throughout the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches for which they came, was well and widely told at the time by the three hundred representatives of the world's press who came with them, and may therefore be taken as read.

Those who want to refresh their memories—or even to add to their present stock of information about the Assembly or the World Council—will find a note as to how they may do so at the end of this article. My intention here is to deal with those aspects of the Assembly's work which, both at the time and still more in retrospect, seem likely to be of interest and importance to readers of *Common Ground*.

### **Problems—but Underlying Unity**

First, then, there was a whole range of problems connected with the need for, and the possibilities of, closer co-operation between the Churches. There was no lack of evidence of "the grave dangers we are in by reason of our unhappy divisions," nor of the seriousness with which members of all sections of the Church have laid those dangers to heart. "We are divided from one another," the Message of the Assembly acknowledges, "not only in matters of faith, order and tradition, but also by pride of nation, class and race."

But if the Assembly was alive to the seriousness of these divisions, it was also deeply conscious of an underlying and indestructible unity in the relation of every Christian to his Lord and Master. "In seeking Him," the Message continued, "we find one another. Here at Amsterdam we have committed ourselves afresh to Him, and have covenanted with one another in constituting this World Council of Churches. We intend to stay together." The realisation that this was much more than any mere form of words was perhaps the richest part of the daily experience of all who were fortunate enough to be at Amsterdam.

### **The Roman Catholic Point of View**

But the World Council of Churches, which is in no sense itself a Church, but only an instrument to facilitate co-operation in study and



*The opening service in the Nieuwe Kerk. (The candelabra were lent by the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam for the Inauguration of Princess Juliana.)*

service between its members, represents only those Churches which are generally, though not always accurately, described as Protestant. The Roman Catholic Church, in accordance with its traditional policy of non-participation in assemblies of non-Roman Christians, was not even represented by observers at Amsterdam. This attitude, so little understood and so readily condemned by the Protestant, has often been stigmatised as a narrow sectarianism based on ecclesiastical arrogance and spiritual imperialism.

It would be idle to deny the existence of good grounds for such a judgment in the writings and pronouncements of many Roman Catholic theologians down through the centuries. Yet, as Professor Kristen E. Skydsgaard of Copenhagen University has pointed out, in one of the preparatory papers for the Assembly on "The Roman Catholic Church and the Ecumenical Movement":

"It would be a serious mistake to content oneself with such a reaction to the position of the Roman Catholic Church, and would, in spite of every difficulty, constitute a far too cheap and easy solution for the non-Roman Churches."

A Roman Catholic point of view is expressed in a supplementary paper by Fr. Maurice Villain who, to quote his own words, has

"tried to show that between the Ecumenical Movement and the Roman Catholic Church a convergence is not only possible, but is gradually taking place."

This must not be read as implying that the Roman Catholic Church is likely now, or at any time, to compromise on matters of dogma, but, to quote Fr. Villain again,

"we do not believe ourselves to be contradicting the principles of the Catholic Church when we affirm that she, too, is beginning (by purification, internal reforms, a reintegration of Christian values which are well preserved in separate confessions) to pass beyond the stage of development which she has reached at the present time."

It is important in this as in all relations between members of different confessions and faiths neither to concede too much to the pessimist, nor to travel too far with the optimist unless his optimism be rooted and grounded not merely in an honest and realistic appraisal of the total situation from the human point of view, but also in the recognition and acceptance of the fact that true unity is a gift of God, and not something to be achieved by mere organisation.

## The Jewish Question

A second matter I thought might interest readers of *Common Ground* was the attitude of the Assembly to the Jewish question. This was reflected in part by a memorandum contributed by the *French Committee of Witness to Israel*, as one of three studies under the general heading of "The Approach to the Adherents of other Faiths." Jewish readers will view with very mixed feelings the fact that they have been singled out, together with the peoples of India and with the adherents of a primitive religion in New Guinea, as representatives of "three widely different religious areas to be approached with the Christian message."

From the discussion of this issue, however, it was evident that Christians in all sections of the Church are gravely disturbed by what they commonly refer to as "the Jewish problem." They are disturbed by the failure of the Churches both historically and in the contemporary world to do justice to the Jewish people, whether from the point of view of understanding them, of witnessing to them, or of making any effective protest against the evil of antisemitism. Their recognition of the extent to which the traditional attitude of the Churches to their Jewish neighbours has itself contributed towards the growth and persistence of antisemitism, does not make their position any easier!

This uneasiness of heart and mind was clearly reflected by the report of a Committee which worked on this problem at Amsterdam. The Assembly in considering this report, unanimously adopted an amendment emphasising the need for more detailed study by the World Council of Churches "of the many complex problems in the field of relations between Christians and Jews," particularly from three points of view: first, the growth of antisemitism and the most effective means of combating it; secondly, the possibilities of developing co-operation between Christians and Jews in civic and social life, and finally, the problem created by the establishment of the Jewish State.

Plans for the inauguration of this further study at a leadership level are, I understand, already in hand. So far as the Assembly itself was concerned, however divided its members were in their judgment on certain aspects of this problem, they were unanimous in their condemnation of antisemitism, which they denounced, "no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith." "Antisemitism" they declared in forthright terms "is sin against God and man."

## **Amsterdam and International Relations**

Finally, Christians and Jews will find much to interest and encourage them in the Assembly's handling of problems in the general field of international relations. The part played by war in our present international life, for example, was declared to be "a sin against God and a degradation of man."

Great stress was laid on the need for the encouragement by domestic and international action of the observance of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Tyranny, whether economic, political or religious, must be opposed, as must also totalitarianism and any form of aggressive imperialism. Discrimination on grounds of race or colour was declared to be intolerable. The Church, the Assembly declared,

"knows that it must call society away from prejudice based upon race or colour and from the practices of discrimination and segregation as denials of justice and human dignity, but it cannot say a convincing word to society unless it takes steps to eliminate these practices from the Christian community because they contradict all that it believes about God's love for all His children."

## **Translating the Principles into Practice**

To the acceptance of that obligation and the working out of its implications in many fields, all who took part in the Assembly felt themselves committed. This is clear from the following paragraph from the Message of the Assembly:

"Our coming together to form a World Council will be vain unless Christians and Christian congregations everywhere commit themselves to the Lord of the Church in a new effort to seek together, where they live, to be His witnesses and servants among their neighbours. We have to remind ourselves and all men that God has put down the mighty from their seats and exalted the humble and meek. We have to learn afresh together to speak boldly in Christ's name both to those in power and to the people, to oppose terror, cruelty and race discrimination, to stand by the outcast, the prisoner and the refugee. We have to make of the Church in every place a voice for those who have no voice, and a home where every man will be at home. We have to learn afresh together what is the duty of the Christian man or woman in industry, in agriculture, in politics, in the professions and in the home."

To have been at Amsterdam was a great privilege and a most moving experience. To share in the task of translating into practice the prin-

ciples there enumerated is a tremendous responsibility. It is good to feel that it is a task to be shared with men of good will in—and even outside—the Churches represented at the Assembly, in all parts of the world.

*For further reading we recommend the following books:*

*The AMSTERDAM ASSEMBLY SERIES prepared under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and published by the S.C.M. Press:*  
Each volume 12/6.

I. *The Universal Church in God's Design*

II. *The Church's Witness to God's Design*

III. *The Church and the Disorder of Society*

IV. *The Church and the International Disorder*

AMSTERDAM, 1948. H. G. G. Herklots. S.C.M. Press 2/6.

*MESSAGE AND REPORTS OF THE FIRST ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES* (with aids to study and discussion) published for the World Council of Churches by the S.C.M. Press.

*We asked for an article on the Conference at San Sebastian because its purpose was so closely allied to the objects of the Council of Christians and Jews.*

## SAN SEBASTIAN

*A. C. F. Beales*

The International Catholic Conference on Human Rights held in San Sebastian last September has proved to be a major international event of the Roman Catholic year. One reason why these *Conversaciones* (as the conference is officially called) are very important, is that they are something new. There has not been anywhere, so far, quite the kind of Charter we were there to draw up. The principles of Christian freedom, of course, are clear enough. There have been formulations and charters of the rights of man, from Catholic sources, in plenty. But they have been mostly from particular countries. Our San Sebastian meetings had before them, on the table, the U.N. Declarations, the British Government's draft, and a number of Catholic drafts and amendments. We were to see how much of all this satisfied everybody, and how to consolidate it into a systematic statement of the Church's position on the rights of the human person against the State, in this present world setting.

### Detailed Rights

We were given hospitality in a Convent halfway up the mountain behind the town, in a peaceful seclusion, and amid a panorama of sea and mountains that made the politics of the outside world seem afar off.

Our work was done in the Town Hall of San Sebastian. The theme of the *Conversaciones* was "The Rights and Duties of the Human Person in Civil Society according to the Doctrine of the Catholic Church." The delegates were divided into three committees of which the first was charged to produce factual information. The second drew up a "Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man according to Catholic Thought," and the third made a special study of rights and duties relative to intellectual and moral activity. The final document, which will be published, covers the rights and duties of the human person, of the family, and of associations of men; then of all these within the international community; and, finally, the rights of the Church.

### **Fundamental Principles**

Some of the delegates wanted primarily a blue-print of detailed rights. But there were also those who, in view of the unique character of this congress, wished to concentrate exclusively on fundamental principles. The final document will be a synthesis, representing both. In the preamble, man is stated to have been created by God and redeemed by Christ, with the Natural Law of his human nature as the foundation of his rights, and the Supernatural Law of Revelation as the edifice erected on that foundation. The Supernatural Law directs man towards his true end, which is to know and serve the Divine Will in this life and to share it to the full in the next. The Catholic Church throughout the world is in complete agreement that on no other basis can the rights of the human person endure.

### **Unity—the Transcendence of Diversity**

At San Sebastian we learned at first hand something that needs thought. It is quite clear that in many European countries large numbers of Catholics who have met Marxism face to face see the future as a spiritual battle between two opposite worlds—the Catholic and the Communist. They tend to say that the middle ground between the two will be forced out of existence by the Marxists, and that, on the question of human rights, everybody except the Catholics will give in to Moscow or else be liquidated. This is why they have little use for Liberalism, or even for the shoulder-to-shoulder campaign in some countries of Catholics and Protestants and men of goodwill.

Another problem we experienced was that of national distinctions. On some questions, much patience and discussion were required in order to reach a text, expressing the Catholic principle, but meeting

the differences of outlook between the Latins and the Nordics. One of the most valuable results, however, of this year's Conference, lay in the realisation of those present that in fundamentals we were all one family. The Catholics at San Sebastian were all representatives of the view that these rights of man are not tenable, or durable, on any other than the true basis—namely, that they are rights coming from God as a free endowment to the mankind He created. An incidental result is that this San Sebastian statement of rights will be agreed with (in general) by millions of people who are not even Christians. People can agree on a programme though they may differ on why they want it, and the results of the Conference will command universal respect in the countries of the world that are still free to express their opinion.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

### ● Human Rights

It is a melancholy reflection on the present state of international affairs that only the more depressing aspects of the work of the United Nations seem to "hit the headlines." Mr. Molotov's "No" has become proverbial. We have come almost to the point of expecting divisions where once we might have hoped for agreement. And yet work of tremendous and far-reaching importance is being done, day in, day out, by Committees whose proceedings and decisions receive but scant attention in the general Press.

Two of these Committees, working throughout this most recent session of the Assembly, have produced documents of the greatest importance—and one might hope interest—not for the statesmen only, but for the Bill Smiths and John Does the world over. These documents are a covenant on *Genocide*—or the attempt by the members of any one society or group to exterminate or to suppress the members of another—and a *Declaration of Human Rights*.

Both the Covenant and the Declaration have been approved by the Assembly. This, in itself, is a very considerable achievement. But much more is needed if the resolutions of a General Assembly are to be integrated into the policies and practices of its member nations. It is clear, for example, that the Declaration of Human Rights can only achieve its purpose in so far as it becomes a matter of real interest and concern to those whose rights it sets out to establish. And these are not merely the statesmen and the lawyers, but the rank and file members of every community in every country.

Here then is material for study and discussion in all kinds of groups. In an article on another page, Mr. Charles Malik deals with three basic

issues inherent in the work of the Commission on Human Rights. We shall do our best to follow this up with detailed studies of particular aspects of the problem in future issues of *Common Ground*.

## ● South Africa

The death of Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr comes as one more blow to liberal opinion in South Africa. It was to him that one looked for leadership in resisting any further measures of race discrimination in the Union.

That there are real difficulties of group relations in a country where four-fifths of the population is at a very much lower level of civilisation than the remaining one-fifth, none would deny. But for the white fifth to hold all power, and for their vote, whether by a simple or a two-thirds majority or a referendum, to determine the rights of the coloured four-fifths, is a situation that cannot permanently endure.

In the long run, the native African races must rise to a status comparable with that of the people of European descent in South Africa. The enlightened policy would be to help forward this development, by improved native education and social services, improved living and working conditions, and a gradually increasing representation and share in government. A policy of more rigid segregation, and of reduced native representation in the Union Parliament, is calculated to have the reverse effect. There are bound to be difficulties attending the development of the coloured peoples, but by a constructive and progressive policy these difficulties could be reduced to a minimum. Repressive measures will lead to more and more friction, while tending to accentuate the conditions on which the claim of white supremacy is based. The more obstacles are put in the way of a gradual development, the greater will be the ultimate upheaval.

Meanwhile, it is a welcome sign that the bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa have issued a joint statement condemning racial discrimination, and calling upon South Africans to reconsider their race attitudes in the light of the teaching of Christ.

## ABOUT OURSELVES

### ● Local Councils

The other day we had a rather disgruntled letter from one of our Associate Members who claimed to have made the alarming discovery that the Council of Christians and Jews was simply a publishing concern, producing a magazine called *Common Ground*, and holding only one meeting a year. He wished therefore to terminate his membership on

the grounds that the Council seemed to take no interest in bringing Christians and Jews together.

Now it is perfectly true that the Council does hold an Annual General Meeting—most respectable organisations do! It is also true that we publish a magazine called *Common Ground*—together, incidentally, with other books and pamphlets—though we are very far from being “just a publishing concern.”

But we could not help feeling that our somewhat indignant friend had not perhaps read his *Common Ground* as carefully as he might have done, or we are sure he must have found some evidence of the Council's active interest in bringing Christians and Jews together and of its work for the promotion of mutual understanding between them.

While such activities are by no means confined to, they are particularly characteristic of, the work of the Local Councils, of which from time to time we hope to report in considerable detail. For the moment, however, we simply want to underline the fact that some splendid work of exactly the kind our friend so properly desires to see *is* being done through some (though admittedly not all) of our Local Councils.

There is lots of room, of course, not only for more work but for more Councils, and it is very cheering to report that during the past few months new groups have been formed in Bristol, Hull and Liverpool. We wish them—and indeed all our Local Councils—well, in their endeavours to promote understanding and goodwill in the community, and we look forward to hearing from them from time to time in the pages of *Common Ground*.

### ● Talking in Threes

Three speakers at one meeting—short of some public rally in the Town Hall—sounds rather a tall order. But have you ever thought how interesting it might be to have a Protestant, a Roman Catholic and a Jewish speaker on the same platform—and on the same subject—emphasising similarities and interesting differences in their respective points of view on such subjects, for example, as the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights and its implications both for Governments and for the rank and file member of the community. There is the additional interest of being able to put questions to them as well.

Think it over, and if you've got a likely meeting with an attendance of thirty or more people, get in touch with Wallace Bell at the Council's office, giving him as long notice as possible of a date on which you'd like one of our “trios” to visit you. Don't fear you've got to organise a special meeting, by the way. Discussion groups, “week-night” meetings—even the senior forms of grammar and secondary schools—all provide exactly the kind of opportunity we are looking for,

## Commentary

## Arab Refugees

There has been a continued interest in the Arab refugees. An article in the *Economist* (October 30th) concluded with:

"The challenge is not only to the United Nations; it is levelled also at the Western World and at the Jews . . . A new nation (Israel) should reflect that it is never politic to make bad neighbours, or to do-as-you-were-done-by when what was done to you is so manifestly wrong. The conclusion is that if UNO fails to act upon this humanitarian issue, the tale of the Arab lives that are left to ebb out will darken the future of many who are behaving as if they were unaffected by the imminent disaster of the refugees."

In the Encyclical Letter *In Multiplicibus* (October 24th) the Pope, writing at some length on Palestine, said:

"We have sought as much as possible to come to the aid of the unhappy victims, sending the means at our disposal to our representatives in Palestine, the Lebanon and Egypt . . . and encouraging the formation among Catholics . . . of undertakings organised for the same purpose." (See *Tablet*, October 30th.)

Scrutator, writing on the refugees in "The Palestine Tragedy" (*Sunday Times*, November 21st) said that whereas wise and merciful Jews have urged repatriation, the Tel-Aviv Government are tempted to use the deserted Arab properties for their own immigrants.

"If that continues . . . the Zionists can create over Palestine the homogenous Jewish population which so many of them desire . . . But they will have created it at a terrible cost. They will have openly founded their State on a terrible wrong."

## Jerusalem

In the second half of November some important correspondence appeared in *The Times* on the subject of the future of Jerusalem.

On November 16th a letter was published, signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, raising three points. First, that the Jewish Government increased its demands with every military advance. Second, that in view of the possibility that, having claimed the New City of Jerusalem, at any moment the Israeli Government might claim the Old City and the Holy Places, the whole city should therefore be placed under international control. Third, he asked: "Will the Jews of this country and of the U.S. declare that they will accept the authority of the United Nations in this matter?" i.e., the establishment of international control of the whole of Jerusalem. On November 18th *The Times* printed two replies. One from the Chief Rabbi, in which he replied to the three points of the Archbishop, concluding his letter:

"May I add that I am more than ready to join the Archbishop in any real effort to achieve peace in Palestine—an overwhelming interest of the whole world on which religious leaders might perhaps hope to unite public opinion?"

The other reply was from Mr. Linton, Acting Representative of the Provisional Government of Israel, in which he gives reasons why the old and the new cities of Jerusalem should be considered separately.

1. Because, in considering measures which should bring security and peace to the Holy Places and the city's inhabitants, "the events since November, 1947, cannot be ignored," e.g., the Arab Legion's onslaught on Jerusalem in defiance of the U.N. decision; the destruction of the Jewish quarter and synagogues; etc.

2. Because there are no religious interests in the modern city. "In the light of this fact . . . and that 100,000 Jews were besieged there while the U.N. stood by practically helpless—Mr. Shertok proposed . . . that modern Jerusalem should be included in . . . the territory of Israel."

In the above mentioned Encyclical, the Pope wrote about Jerusalem:

"We are full of faith that these prayers and these hopes . . . will strengthen the conviction in the high quarters in which the problems of peace are discussed that it would be opportune to give Jerusalem and its outskirts . . . an international character . . . It would also be necessary to assure, with international guarantees, both free access to Holy Places scattered throughout Palestine, and the freedom of worship and the respect of customs and religious traditions." (See *Tablet*, October 30th.)

## Diary

SEPT. 30, 1948: U.N. General Assembly begins exhaustive discussion of draft Declaration of Human Rights.

OCT. 1: Bishop Ordas (Lutheran Church) condemned in Hungary by the People's Court for alleged offences against currency laws.

OCT. 6: Paris. Mr. Shertok at U.N. Security Council declares Bernadotte report unacceptable, if only because of proposal to give Negeb to Arabs. He recognises that Holy Places in Jerusalem have a special international religious significance, but does not think this justifies the making of the whole city into an international area.

OCT. 10: Board of Deputies of British Jews passes resolution urging British Government to accord full recognition to State of Israel.

OCT. 16: Cease Fire call for Negeb issued by U.N. truce supervisory board, as result of outbreak of serious fighting in that area.

OCT. 17: Fighting in Negeb intensified.

OCT. 19: Jewish threat to Gaza.

OCT. 22: Dr. Bunche asks Jews and Arabs if ready to order immediate Cease Fire so as to provide time for settlement of basic difficulties regarding truce observance in Negeb.

Hungarian Government issues stern warning to Cardinal Mindszenty for letters sent by him to members of Government expressing disapproval of agreement signed between Hungary and Czechoslovakia concerning minority resettlements.

- OCT. 24: Pope publishes Encyclical Letter on Palestine.
- OCT. 28: Death of Dr. Judah L. Magnes, President of Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- OCT. 29: Letter in *The Times* signed by Bishop of Chichester, claiming alleged offences of Bishop Ordas a "pure fabrication," and that he was condemned because he opposed Government's policy on educational and other matters on religious grounds. (See October 1.)
- OCT. 31: Reports from Tel Aviv that Israeli troops occupy whole of Galilee.
- Nov. 1: Cairo. Archbishop Hughes (Papal Internuncio to Egypt) appeals on behalf of Arab refugees.  
Geneva. World Health Organisation decides to grant emergency aid to all Palestine refugees regardless of nationality.
- Nov. 3: British Council of Churches decides to instruct Ecumenical Refugee Committee to support appeal on behalf of Palestine refugees of all nationalities.
- Nov. 5: Budgetary Committee of U.N. Assembly agrees to allocate \$5,000,000 from U.N. working capital for relief of Arab refugees provided sum reimbursed in U.S.A. dollars.
- Nov. 9: Paris. Britain announces that she will subscribe £1,000,000 for relief of Palestinian Arab refugees, conditional on other countries subscribing proportionately.
- Nov. 15: Paris. Mr. Shertok, explains why Israel needs the Negeb and access to the Gulf of Aqaba; he states that the Israeli Government would observe the principles of international custody for the Holy Places, but claims the permanent inclusion in Israel of the extra-mural city of Jerusalem. He requests that Israel be admitted to the United Nations.

Books by Wallace Nichols

## THE INTERVENERS

This is a beautifully-made tale, and in this, as well as in the manipulation of the swiftly moving drama, it reminds me of the work of Seton Merriman. *John O'London's*. Many readers will enjoy this gentle pastiche of the post-Napoleonic period. . . . Mr. Nichols's portraits are drawn with a sure hand.

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NEWMAN WOLSEY PUBLISHERS.

- Nov. 18: *The Times*. Letter from Archbishop of Canterbury re. Future of Jerusalem.
- Nov. 19: *The Times*. Reply of Chief Rabbi to Archbishop of Canterbury. Paris. U.N. Assembly passes resolution calling on major States for contributions towards relief of Arab refugees amounting to \$29,500,000.
- Nov. 28: Budapest. Deputy Prime Minister in speech to Communist Party Executive, gives ultimatum to Cardinal Mindszenty, warning him that "policy of tolerance" is ended, and alleging that "Fascism is now presenting itself in the robe of the Catholic Church."
- Nov. 30: Agreement providing for "complete and sincere" cease-fire in Jerusalem, signed by commanders of Israeli forces and Arab Legion.

### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

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**Charles Malik** is President of the U.N. Economic and Social Council, Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights and Minister of Lebanon in the U.S.A. He is a member of the Greek-Orthodox Church.

**Frederic Mason** is Lecturer in Education at the University of Leeds.

#### DO YOU READ—

#### YOUR DENOMINATIONAL WEEKLY NEWSPAPER?

BAPTIST TIMES	ENGLISH CHURCHMAN
BRITISH WEEKLY	THE FRIEND
CATHOLIC HERALD	GUARDIAN
CATHOLIC TIMES	JEWISH CHRONICLE
CHRISTIAN HERALD	JEWISH WEEKLY
CHRISTIAN WORLD	METHODIST RECORDER
CHURCH OF ENGLAND NEWSPAPER	SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRONICLE
CHURCH TIMES	TABLET

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